

Community Rail 2022/23

Patchway

GWR



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Front cover:

Children and volunteers sign the words “together we are stronger” in front of an artwork by Katie Hanning and George Dawes at Patchway station

Foreword

It is always a pleasure to be asked to write the foreword for our annual community rail booklet. I am a passionate believer in the value of community rail, and I am always delighted by the strength and the innovation shown by GWR’s 10 amazing community rail partnerships (CRPS).



Not a year goes by when there isn’t some community rail success to draw on, but having looked back at my foreword for the year before last, I am struck by how much Covid, Omicron and pingdemics were still a factor in our everyday lives. This last year has, I very much hope, finally closed the door on that chapter, allowing us to start the recovery process in earnest.

That does not mean that the impact is not still felt. Nationally, passenger figures are at a 20-year low and there is now a more permanent change to the way we work. We are not going to see a return to the nine-to-five office worker, and business travel will have to compete with the ease and flexibility of online meetings.

Not travelling for work does not, of course, mean not travelling. There has been a boom in leisure travel and our community rail lines have been at the forefront of that switch. You have all been doing some fantastic work in attracting and retaining leisure customers. There really has been some tremendous work this year from CRPs marketing their local areas and showing what a day out by rail can mean – and not just a day out by rail, but a day out by rail and bus, or rail and cycle, or rail and walking.

I firmly believe that the work we are now doing together on integrated travel is a model of best practice for the country. GWR CRPs are once again at the cutting edge, creating a bridge between communities, customers and the railway, so that we can offer the best service, keeping communities connected and helping the local economy to thrive.

It is going to be another hard year though. There are financial challenges that will impact our customers’ ability to spend and, quite rightly, taxpayer subsidies will be reduced. That is going to mean tough decisions on budgets. That said, we know the added value that CRPs bring and our services are better because of the hard work you put in.

We are committed to continuing to support you, in the same way that you support our customers. Together we will face these new challenges and I have no doubt that once again, next year, we will all be looking back on another year full of activity and community support.

Thank you for all you do. It is really making a difference.

Mark Hopwood
Managing Director

Hello from the GWR team

It's been another exciting and busy year for everyone in community rail, especially now we're on the other side of the post-pandemic recovery period. Our work has really picked up in the last 12 months and we have lots of amazing projects to share with you here, in our annual showcase.

There are now 10 community rail partnerships (CRPs) on the GWR network, with three more proposed CRPs currently under assessment. Our community reach keeps growing and, although we won't know until the end of March if the recent bids have been successful, if these three cross the line, nearly the whole GWR network will be covered by CRPs. It's an amazing achievement and one that has always been fundamental to our vision.

As we expand, it's important that we continue to work more and more collaboratively. We've always encouraged a strong alliance among the organisations and individuals working in community rail, and, in particular, we've strived to cultivate a sturdy bond between ourselves, the CRPs and Network Rail.

This working relationship has gone from strength to strength. Communication has never been better and we hope this will continue for a long time to come.

While existing relationships thrive, our colleagues Jo Hake, GWR's CRP Marketing Manager, and Luke Farley, GWR's Transport Integration Manager, have been forging new and exciting connections, helping to expand the reach of the rail network through

collaboration with local bus routes. Their integrated rail projects help a wider breadth of people access the GWR network more easily.

Our education outreach projects are likewise impacting more individuals than ever. Platform, delivering community rail education on behalf of Worcestershire, TransWilts, Gloucestershire and Severnside community rail partnerships, and GoTrain on the North Downs Line, have been encouraging groups of people less inclined to use the train to utilise the network to find work, to broaden horizons and explore the countryside.

These amazing education projects were among the many initiatives recognised at the Community Rail Awards 2022. Eight CRP projects on the GWR network were awarded first, second and third places across a wide range of categories. It really was an impressive year for winning gongs, especially when just getting shortlisted – against stiff competition – is an achievement in itself.

We look forward to hearing from you. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to get in touch at community.rail@gwr.com



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South West Wales Connected Community Rail Partnership



At South West Wales Connected, we had another successful year bringing positive change and creating social value across Neath, Port Talbot, Swansea, Carmarthen and Pembrokeshire.



We were joint winners of the Wales on Rails award at the Community Rail Awards

We were nominated for two separate awards at the Community Rail conference in Manchester. Although we didn't take the top spot, we were lucky to share the Wales on Rails award with other Welsh CRPs.

South West Wales Connected, with help from GWR, Transport for Wales, local councils and other partners, has worked hard to install bespoke metal planters at Swansea train station. The planters have not only helped create a sense of place, but have also had a positive effect on the environment, and include bee hotels and specialist soils and plants to encourage biodiversity.

We have been working with local schools and community groups to create a mural at Swansea Station, which has been funded by GWR and other partners, to showcase what the city has to offer. The artists at Fresh Creative, who will help produce the mural, will ask young people, and other groups involved, to come to the station and participate in installing the artwork, giving the community a sense of ownership regarding their local station.



New planters brighten up Swansea station

South West Wales Connected, again with support from GWR and other partners, has proudly delivered another round of Changemakers funding that will help encourage positive change and placemaking across the region. We supported over 20 projects in the latest round of funding, helping over 200 people and financing everything from community gardens to local choirs. These projects have given communities the chance to take ownership of the places they love. The fund also helped projects win accolades at the High Sheriff Awards and the Cardiff Volunteer Awards – the list keeps growing.

After last year's youth project, Train Chat, we launched a very successful campaign to encourage young people across the region to ditch their car and travel by train. The campaign, co-created by young people, has proven to be very successful. While the final statistics are being collated, we can meanwhile see a definite enthusiasm across the region, with many young people engaging through social media channels and freshers' events to learn about Railcards, discounted travel and upgrades via apps such as Seatfrog.

For the year ahead, we will be delivering a wide range of projects, including a new round of Changemakers, and continuing to work with stakeholders, communities and partners to build a happier, healthier South West Wales.



Family community garden



The Changemakers choir



The team at the annual LGBT+ pride event

Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership



We've had an exciting year at GCRP, welcoming on board new team members who are pushing forward the sustainable transport agenda. By utilising our collective drive and commitment to our core values and vision – to create a society where transport is more inclusive, sustainable and better connects people – we are committed to building partnerships and making a positive impact in our local communities.

Leisure and tourism

TrainTripper

Our innovative platform, TrainTripper, promotes car-free leisure trips in and around Gloucestershire, integrating transport information and local businesses and attractions. Working with four key destination management and marketing organisations, the platform is supported by GWR, Cross Country and Visit Gloucestershire, and will launch in early 2023. The long-term aim is to generate sustainable tourism across the county and to help people fall in love with train travel.

Taste for travel

Building on our popular Leisure Trails, this year we developed a Gloucestershire-wide map that celebrates sustainable transport and active travel. This map, made in partnership with Visit Gloucestershire, was cross-promoted, achieving over 8,500 engagements on social media. We are launching three new leisure maps in 2023, celebrating the Cotswolds, Gloucestershire's food and drink, and Gloucester city.



Our sustainable transport map was a great success

Community rail and destination toolkit

A community rail and destination toolkit, developed alongside the Travel Foundation, features tips, case studies and ideas for action, designed to highlight opportunities for better, more climate-friendly travel in the rail-for-leisure market. Research has revealed the potential for community rail to act as a linchpin, stimulating a meaningful shift towards sustainable transport in the leisure and tourism sector.

Transport and planning

Connecting new communities

We are engaging with developers, local authorities, transport operators, travel plan coordinators and local communities in Great Oldbury, Brockworth, and Cam and Dursley.

In Great Oldbury, we partnered with Creative Sustainability to encourage communities to act on transport and accessibility. We helped produce an access and connectivity guide for Brockworth, supporting wayfinding for locals and visitors. We piloted this at a community event and co-produced a welcome pack. In May, we held a workshop, along with the University of Gloucestershire, the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport, Community Rail Network (CRN) and the Community Transport Association, where we demonstrated the importance of community voice on issues regarding transport. We continue working with CRN to deliver national guidance on how CRPs can actively engage with town planning processes.

Access audit

We are working with Inclusion Gloucestershire to audit 20 visitor destinations in Gloucestershire, selected in consultation with eight tourism and destination marketing specialists. The audit will explore barriers to accessing these destinations and what transport solutions best suit people's needs. We are also considering broader social inclusion for disabled people, people with invisible disabilities and people with other protected characteristics.



Getaway project participants

Access maps

New access and connectivity guides have been developed for Cam and Dursley and Chepstow/Sedbury, ready for public engagement and consultation with stakeholder organisations in both areas. Our existing guides have been refreshed and we are working with Gloucestershire County Council's transport planning advisers to develop further community maps that show last-mile connections to stations across the county.

Youth and education

Let's Talk Travel

We were incredibly proud to be awarded third place at the Community Rail Awards for our Let's Talk Travel project, which was recognised in the field of Influencing Positive Change and Sustainability, which focuses on the barriers to employment experienced by people in the community. We continue to build travel confidence to improve individuals' access to work and opportunities. Engaging more than 40 organisations and employability and education professionals across Gloucestershire, we have raised awareness, shared more than 5,000 resources and maximised access to information, leading to employability professionals and tutors feeling better equipped to support their clients.

Getaway

Our Getaway project, which encourages young city-dwellers to visit the countryside by train, won first place at the Community Rail Awards for Involving Diverse Groups. We continue to build on this success through stronger relationships with local community organisations and schools, and by delivering trips to Gloucestershire's rural spaces through rail travel for urban youths. This autumn, we reached a new milestone, engaging 121 young people with five trips from Gloucester to Lydney, Stroud and Malvern.



Route to success: participants take part in Let's Talk Travel

The trips are being enhanced through designing an activity pack alongside young people from Gloucestershire Youth Climate Group. The pack will provide young people on Getaway trips an opportunity to explore rail travel and sustainability in Gloucestershire.

Communicating sustainability

Our research last year with University of Gloucestershire students found that many young people were confused by messaging around sustainability. We are conducting market research regarding messaging for young people that captures environmental and social benefits of sustainability in the community rail context. Based on our research findings, we will provide a series of resources for use on GCRP's digital platforms.



Station exhibitors celebrate community activism

Communities

Station exhibitions

Following on from Cheltenham Camera Club's successful 2021 photography exhibition at Cheltenham Spa station waiting rooms, a photography exhibition was launched in July at Stonehouse, Stroud and Gloucester. Photos produced by members of the club showcased Gloucestershire and encouraged train travel across the county. Our current exhibition is a partnership project between GCRP, Creative Sustainability, Strike A Light and The Radical Youth Space for Education, celebrating community and youth activism in Gloucestershire.

Station adoption

Thanks to the hard work of our various adoption groups, our stations have been improved with new garden spaces and platform galleries. Stonehouse in Bloom, an organisation that uses horticulture to encourage the community to care for their local environment, won gold in the RHS Heart of England in Bloom competition – for the fifth year in a row! Their Station Master's Garden is now a community grow and share space where passers-by can help themselves to fruit and veg.

Our flower beds at Stroud station were tended by Network Rail volunteers, ensuring future volunteer days could be spent focusing on maintaining the station's raised beds. Our visit to National Trust Castlefield Viaduct – an activity organised as part of the Community Rail Awards – inspired exciting new projects for green urban spaces in Gloucestershire.



Stonehouse in Bloom

Oxfordshire feasibility study

We are thinking beyond Gloucestershire and considering launching an Oxfordshire CRP. This would help merge leisure and tourism with health and wellbeing perspectives. We are consulting key stakeholders to identify local challenges, priorities and areas of need, which we'll use to inform future projects, the development of stations as places, inclusive and accessible travel options, and education schemes.

Seeing as Oxfordshire has a good mix of visitor attractions that can be easily accessed via the rail network, focus groups will test pilot leisure trails radiating out from Kingham and Charlbury stations.

Rail to Ride

The Rail to Ride project in Stroud is working to create confident train travellers in Gloucester. Participants learned about train travel, including how to purchase tickets and book seats, how to navigate train routes and how to use bike storage. On top of this, they attended the Access Bike Project's community bike workshop to learn about bike mechanics and how to refurbish bicycles, which they were allowed to keep at the end of the project. Bike ride routes from the station are being tested and developed through consultations with young people.

Seven young refugees and asylum have been among the participants, and two routes have been tested. We aim for 24 young people to take part and two new route guides will be produced for cycle routes from Stroud station. A feasibility study will report on options to create a cycle hub at Stroud station, considering the station as a destination for cycle hire and tourist cycling.

Train TimeTravel, Together in Matson

This project takes local community members back in time to visit historic places. Members of the Redwell Centre, a community centre in Gloucester, went by train to visit historic sites, helping spark a sense of adventure, as well as being an opportunity to take a break from day-to-day life. Participants visited Worcester Cathedral, enjoyed afternoon tea, saw the carnival in Weston-super-Mare and enjoyed the Christmas markets in Birmingham. The days out catered to the various needs and interests of the community, and there are more trips planned for 2023.



Participants in the TrainTimeTravel, Together in Matson Project



Stonehouse in Bloom won gold in the RHS Heart of England competition



Getaway: young city-dwellers visit the countryside by train

South Wessex Community Rail Partnership



What an exciting first year we had launching South Wessex CRP. In spring 2022, we welcomed Chantelle Bacon as our new Community Rail Officer.

Chantelle brings with her a wealth of experience. She has worked on community projects and, in her previous role as Community Champion for a large retail firm, organised charity events.

We launched our new CRP website and the associated new posters have gone up at each station. We are in the process of launching our social media profiles.



Chantelle Bacon (centre) with Yetminster volunteers on Stations in Bloom Day

Stations

When we launched the partnership, some of our stations did not have an adoption group. Now, every station in our CRP has an adoption group and we are closely working with Nicole Black, GWR's CRP Relationship Manager, to make sure all the onboarding is complete.

Projects

We are working very closely with the adoption groups, and have funded new plants, troughs and planters for Maiden Newton. We also helped the Friends of Bruton fund new plants and slats for the station's bench.

Dorchester West station is much improved thanks to a fresh coat of paint and new white picket fence, courtesy of GWR. The volunteers were grateful for a grant from GWR for new planters.

In August 2022, we held our first public launch meeting at Maiden Newton Village Hall. It was great to see the community, volunteers and stakeholders, in person, for a catch up and to discuss all our exciting plans for the year ahead.

Stations in Bloom

July's Stations in Bloom event, for which we worked collaboratively with Blackmore Vale CRP, was a huge success. It was so lovely to see all the hard work that the volunteers had put into their station. In October, as way of thanking the volunteers, we held a very special awards ceremony with an afternoon tea at Castle Gardens in Sherborne. It was such a great afternoon and every station on our line that had entered won an award, which are already on display at some of our stations. Many thanks to Ann Jenner, GWR's Community Delivery Manager, who helped judge, and Caroline from Blackmore Vale, who organised the event.

Project coming soon

We have great plans for the meeting rooms at Frome station. We have still yet to sign the lease, but we are slowly getting there. It is so lovely to see the Frome community all come together to see how we achieve this. We will look forward to updating you all with the progress.

Alongside other CRPs, South Wessex was proud to take part in the annual Poppies to Paddington event for Remembrance Week. Our wreath was carried from Frome to London to join more than 100 other commemorative messages ahead of a special service beside the war memorial on Paddington station's Platform 1, at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month.

All in all, it has been a great first year for South Wessex CRP. We've had such great help and support from Heather Cullimore at Severnside CRP and Sophie Martin at TransWilts CRP.

We are really looking forward to the projects we have planned for the coming year. We will be sure to keep you posted.

Southeast Communities Rail Partnership



We started a trend in 2022, inviting local schools to submit pieces of art for display in station shelters. In Chilworth, the children at Tillingbourne Junior School and Chilworth Infant School showcased their artistic talents.



Platform paintings: Chilworth station displays work by local schoolchildren

The primary school students had already begun several art projects, ranging from an interpretation of Edvard Munch's *The Scream* to a T. rex. Chilworth Infant School was asked to produce pictures of local Surrey Hills landmarks – St Martha's Church being particularly popular – and each school received a donation of £100 to be used in other school projects.

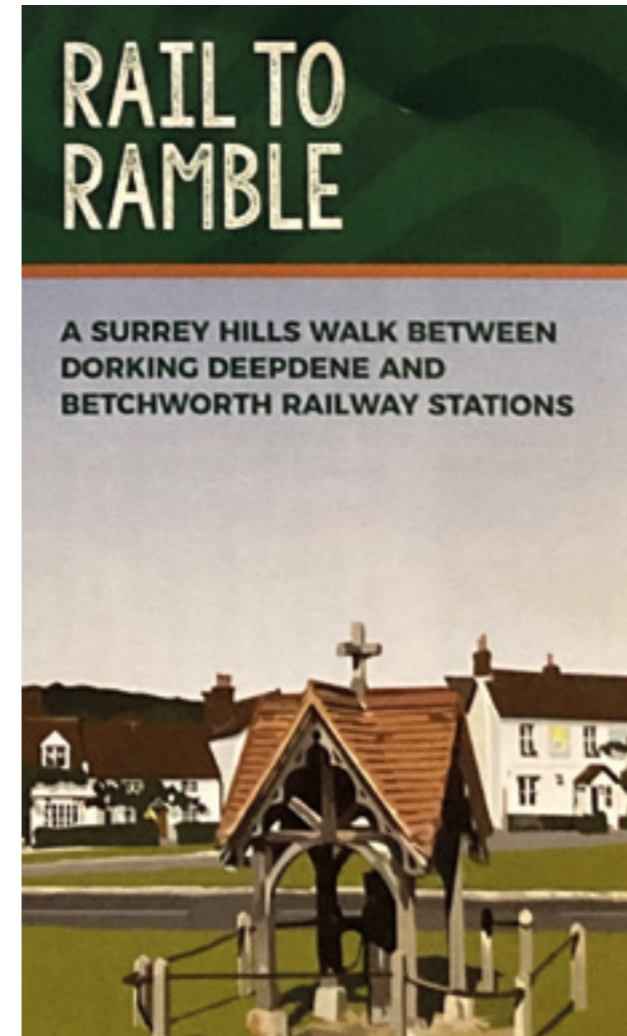
In late 2020, the Network Rail Stakeholder Manager for Wessex, Rob Hodgkinson, approached Southeast CRP with the idea of creating a mural at Guildford station. A project team was formed, consisting of Network Rail, Southeast CRP, SWR, GWR, Guildford Arts, The Arts Society Guildford and The Arts Society. We engaged a local designer/artist, Julie Hoyle, found some grant funding and commissioned her to deliver a 10m x 1.5m mural. It was officially unveiled in April 2022 by Lucy McAuliffe, Head of Stations for Network Rail, in the presence of the Mayor of Guildford and other dignitaries and representatives.

During the summer, GWR, Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Southeast CRP worked in tandem to deliver some new Rail to Ramble walks along the North Downs Line, which



A fantastic collaborative effort produced a wonderful piece of art, which has made an amazing difference to the somewhat unwelcoming subway at Guildford

have proved very popular. There are now four separate walks between Shalford and Betchworth, encompassing some delightful villages and beautiful countryside along the way.



The Rail to Ramble booklet encourages people to explore the countryside by train



The fully occupied allotments at Reg's Garden, Farnborough North

We supported several initiatives at Farnborough North as Reg's Garden, a plot cared for by volunteers, went from strength to strength. The allotments are now fully occupied – as you can see from the photo. The garden was used for many events during the year, hosting a fete and a local music festival during the summer. Once again, Reg's Garden Honey, from the hives at the far end of the plot, has gone down a treat with everyone lucky enough to have tried it.

In the future, Farnborough Street Residents Association hopes to lease the old Station Master's House, with a view to refurbishing it ready for community use. Many local groups have expressed interest in using the facility, from playgroups to the local Women's Institute. Mike Knott and his team of volunteers are ready to act as tenants for the property once the arrangements have been made with Network Rail.

Late in 2022, we approached two junior schools close to North Camp station. Now, we have lots of children's art on display, produced by South Farnborough Juniors and Holly Lodge. As the town is closely associated with the army and aviation, the children have based their pictures on these themes, particularly in reference to Samuel Cody, one of the early flying pioneers. Each school will be presented with a cheque for £100 towards their funds.

There has been some great local feedback, as you can see from these social media posts:



Coming up in the (very) near future...

- A station garden will be introduced at North Camp, with help from North Camp Matters Community Association, to sit between platform 2 and the Old Ford pub, surrounding a sliver birch.
- A plaque and explanatory poster at Chilworth will act as a memorial to former train guard Henry Wicks, describing why Jessie's Seat came to exist following a fatal accident in 1892. The train ran as a special on February 29 2020, exactly 128 years to the day after the crash occurred.

Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership



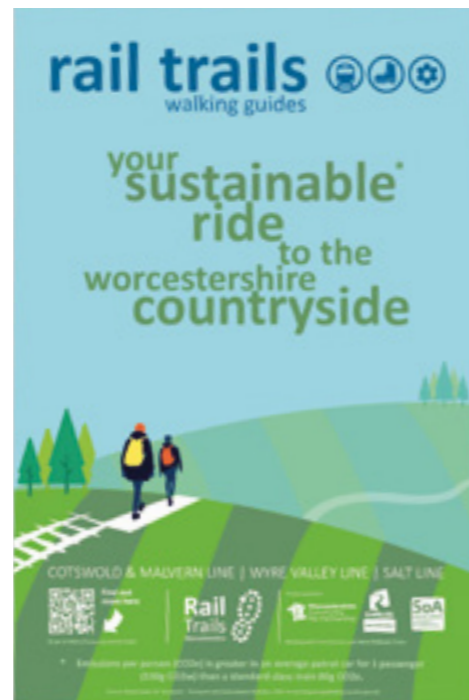
Last year was an exciting one for WCRP, with lots of projects in the pipeline, fantastic station adoption work and new additions to our board.



Evesham Station Garden Project

We have been working in partnership with several organisations, such as the University of Worcester, Worcester Cathedral, the Malvern Radar and Technology History Society, and Beyond the Hills Community Station Partnership, on several initiatives that aim to bring stations and rail travel into the heart of local communities.

We have welcomed a new Chair and two new organisations onto our board, including SLC Rail and Community First Herefordshire and Worcestershire. William Whiting, our Chair, stepped down after three years in office and remained very active in our organisation until his death in January 2023. Our newly appointed Chair, Ian Baxter, works for SLC Rail and has many years' experience in both the operating and community aspects of the rail industry. We have also welcomed Nick Comley from Community First Herefordshire and Worcestershire, a charity and rural community council for Herefordshire and Worcestershire, supporting communities with health and wellbeing, community buildings, community enterprise, community-led housing, sustainability and resilience.



A poster for Rail Trails, walking routes that link railway stations

WCRP has been working in collaboration with the University of Worcester and Worcester Ramblers to produce Rail Trails – routes that link railway stations, providing a linear walk – for the Cotswolds and Malverns Line. Once completed, walkers will be able to stroll along a stretch of new path and either return by foot or by rail. The first phase – the Cotswolds and Malverns Line – is near completion and, in total, a 42-mile-long route has been created, linking all eight stations between Great Malvern and Honeybourne. The routes will be available as downloadable pdf guide sheets and corresponding GPX files that can be used on walking apps. Rail Trails will offer walkers from all over the UK the opportunity to explore the beautiful Worcestershire countryside in a healthy and sustainable way.

Our brand-new guide for the Cotswolds and Malverns Line showcases the many attractions that can be visited from stations along the route, including the magnificent Worcester Cathedral, the beautiful Malvern Hills, Pershore Abbey and the Almonry at Evesham, to name but a few. The guide is available in printed format from WCRP and as a pdf on our website.

We are delighted to be welcoming the Malvern Radar and Technology History Society (MRATHS) to Great Malvern Station. In 2023, they will be opening the Technology Station in what are currently disused rooms, bringing not only increased footfall to the station, but also the exciting history of the area from 1942 onwards. It was at that time that two top-secret government radar research establishments were hastily evacuated to Malvern. Their work had a transformative effect on the war effort, Malvern and modern electronic technology worldwide. MRATHS and the Technology Station were formed to celebrate this history, and to inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers by telling some of the amazing stories of the technological developments that took place in Malvern from 1942 until 2001.

County lines, greener stations and a sad farewell

WCRP is working with Worcester Cathedral; the Clewer Initiative, a charity that seeks to raise awareness about modern slavery; rail education scheme Platform; and the community group the Worcester Mothers Union on a resource that educates young people on the dangers of county lines involvement. County lines is the illegal transportation of drugs or weapons from one area to another and, sadly, the rail network is used, alongside other transport routes, for this criminal activity. While young people caught up in this crime may be perpetrators, they are often also victims of grooming by gangs and, once coerced into taking part, find it very difficult, if not impossible, to escape on their own. The exploitative manipulation of young people by criminal gangs can be seen as a form of modern slavery and it is hoped that the video will help to inform and educate young people about the issue and the dangers involved, and let them know there are people who can help. Schools' workshops will accompany the launch of the video at Worcester Cathedral in March 2023.

Together with voluntary Community Station Partnership, Beyond the Hills, WCRP is producing a book about the Malvern Hills. The book contains a diverse range of essays from local people on a wide range of topics such as the history, geology, geography and legends of the hills. It also tells the story of the areas' railway development, and the engineering challenges and solutions to providing both passenger and freight transportation. Following the pandemic, there has been an increase in leisure rail journeys, with people exploring more active and sustainable ways to travel. The book is the perfect companion for rail travellers in this beautiful part of central England leading to the Welsh Marches.

Station adopters have been busy and it's been fantastic to see the exciting new developments at Evesham and Pershore stations over the past year. The adopters of the Evesham Station Garden Project have continued to work their green-fingered magic, with help from a GWR grant. Network Rail kindly offered a new area of land for the adopters to cultivate and they are currently transforming the plot into a nature garden. The Pershore Civic Society has had a brand-new noticeboard installed at the station, with funding from both GWR and WCRP. The board welcomes visitors travelling by rail to the Georgian riverside town and contains a town map highlighting places of interest in the local area. Thanks to the dedication of the Evesham and Pershore adopters, the stations include both attractive greenery and useful information for rail visitors.

All of us at WCRP were deeply saddened by the news of William Whiting's sudden and unexpected death at the end of January 2023. William was WCRP's first Chair and led our organisation from inception right up until November 2023, when his tenure ended after three years in post.



Train travel enthusiast: the late, great William Whiting

William was passionate about making rail travel accessible and available to all, and worked with enthusiasm and vigour to introduce individuals, groups and communities to the joys of travelling by rail. William combined his great love of train travel with his passion for walking and was a key figure in the development of our Rail Trails project. His expert knowledge on all things rail, walking and music, together with his heart-warming optimism in identifying children as our future, made him simply irreplaceable. It was a pleasure to have worked with William.

Reading Basingstoke Community Rail Partnership



Last year was a busy year for Reading Basingstoke CRP, as local groups and organisations became aware of our work and we began some productive joint working relationships.



The Boabab: one of the recommended stops in our 12 new walking guides

Reading West

For a while, Reading West has experienced some antisocial behaviour. With trespassing and unsafe activities taking place on the platform, we have been working to identify ways of improving the station environment. A working group, formed of Network Rail, GWR staff and our Community Rail Officer, Lucy Lomax, has been meeting to discuss the issues. Passenger surveys were completed to identify how passengers could feel safer at the station.

We identified that a clear-up of the station was a priority, creating a safer and cleaner environment. Cutting overgrown shrubbery and trees will help make it easier to manage litter at the site, and a space on one of the platforms was identified as a good place to install artwork. Working with Reading Borough Council's Culture Placemaking Officer, we engaged with local groups who are suffering from poor mental health and we decided on 'Journeys' as a theme for artwork. Network Rail has begun engaging with local schools to improve rail safety understanding in the local youth population, while GWR has made an Access for All funding bid to

improve the look and security of the station. When all these work streams come together in 2023, we believe it will make a significant improvement to Reading West.

LaunchPad 135

We have been working with LaunchPad 135, Reading's first work and life skills centre helping vulnerable people rebuild their lives by learning new skills, building confidence and getting back into work. During the previous year, we gave clients at LaunchPad 135 an opportunity to develop their skills and confidence when using the train to widen their job searches, including travelling by train for interviews and for leisure purposes.

We delivered two courses with successful outcomes and, in 2023, a course will be offered four times a year, reaching out to more groups. The key to success has been working with small groups, maintaining quality instruction and fostering relationships with users so as to encourage participation and discussion. We were even able to train one participant as a mentor for the next course we ran.

The first session involved planning a journey and looking at maps and timetables (both on paper and online). Participants then talked about the train station, safety issues and what resources are available – for example, buying tickets, who they can seek advice and/or support from, why it's important to keep behind the yellow line, how to book assistance if needed and general train etiquette.

During the second session, the group visited Reading railway station where clients used the ticket and information machines, looked at the platform boards, chatted with staff about their job roles and identified staff during a full tour of the station. The third session involved going on a train trip, thanks to GWR.

"This is the first time we have run a session like this," said LaunchPad 135 Team Leader Sian Walsh. "During our careers support and work-ready sessions, some clients mentioned that they had a small search radius when looking for jobs. This was because they hadn't thought about transport and commuting or didn't feel confident enough to consider it. Other clients told us that they have friends and family who live in different areas, and gaining confidence to travel by train could expand their social network and give them an opportunity to get out of Reading and enjoy the wider area."



A landmark near the Reading Basingstoke line

"Although some clients were initially quite nervous about the thought of going on a train, Community Rail Officer Lucy is very knowledgeable and was able to settle their nerves. They even learned about how different Railcards can be used to get discounts and how to get the best deal on tickets via the ticket desk, as staff have access to lots of information. We can't wait to see how our clients use their newfound independence."

"It has been a learning curve for me working with this special group of adults," said Lucy. "It was interesting to learn about the barriers there are if you don't own a mobile phone or have not used a train for many years. The highlight of the trips was seeing the benefits for the group going on a short journey exploring a new area and getting out of Reading. The training seemed to give them much food for thought for future travel."

Walk the Camino

Last year, we also promoted the Walk the Camino trail, which starts at Reading station and finishes in Southampton. Discovered as part of a new project to create a walks guide for routes starting and ending at stations along the Reading Basingstoke line, the walk has been great fun to explore. Twelve new walks have been mapped out for ramblers, encouraging them to travel by train and explore the area. The guide should be available in hard copy and online in spring 2023. One of the walks, from Bramley to Mortimer, will be one of the guided walks at the Reading Walking Festival in May 2023.

It is amazing just how easy it is to visit some of the most delightful countryside in just a few minutes of leaving either Reading or Basingstoke.



Lucy Lomax samples one of the 12 new routes

Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership



Hampshire CRP continues to develop thanks to the excellent support of our stakeholders and funders. We now have four CRPs in our area, with the addition of the Wey Valley CRP between Alton and Guildford. Three Rivers CRP has grown, with the addition of Micheldever Station and the amalgamation of the Surrey Hills, South Downs and East Hampshire CRPs into one new partnership, to be named the Hills to Harbour CRP, which will provide extended coverage from Guildford through to Portsmouth Harbour.



Travel with Confidence: helping participants gain independence

While our rail bus link services were out of action because of Covid-19 restrictions, we tried to find a way to improve onward travel opportunities using funding from the Community Rail Network and Department for Transport's Integrated Transport Fund. In Three Rivers CRP, another pioneering project was set up to link rail, bus and ferry joint ticketing. After much negotiation, we were able to establish a one-day ticket, called the Waterside Wanderer, which provides unlimited train and bus travel in the Southampton and New Forest Waterside area, along with a trip on the Hythe Ferry. We hope the joint ticketing will let others see that all public transport operators can work together, especially as Three Rivers is promoting the reopening of the Waterside Railway at the same time under the Government's Reversing Beeching Fund. Special thanks must go to South Western Railway, GWR, Blue Star Buses and the Hythe Ferry for developing this great ticket idea.



Daytrippers on an outing with Travel with Confidence

Romsey Men's Shed

Funding from GWR enabled us to commission Romsey Men's Shed to make planters for Romsey station. This has helped us to make the station a welcoming place for locals and visitors alike. Volunteers filled the planters and have plans to continue working at the station.

Train to Travel and Travel with Confidence

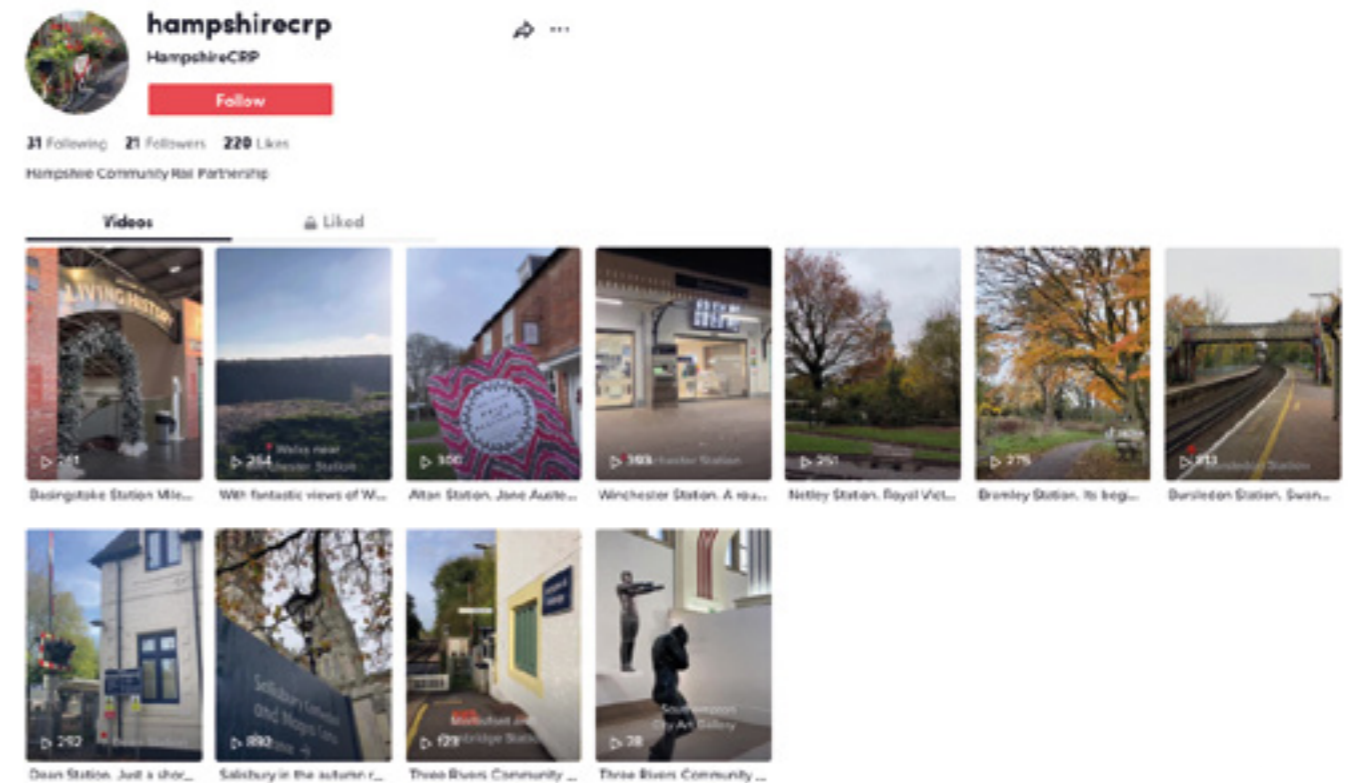
During the last year, we have continued to develop our Train to Travel and Travel with Confidence projects. Working with groups such as Green Buttercup CIC dementia services and learning disabilities charity Winchester Go LD, our Community Rail Officer Lucy Lomax has hosted workshops and trips to stations along our lines. The projects helped participants to gain confidence in rail travel and develop relationships with local community groups and organisations, which we hope to continue to foster. It has been an enjoyable project and one we will be developing further in 2023, with more school outreach and projects in our new Wey Valley CRP.

Social media

The Hampshire Community Rail Partnership decided to refocus its social media. Creating a single page for Hampshire CRP that encompasses Three Rivers CRP, Wey Valley CRP, Hills to Harbour CRP and Reading Basingstoke CRP, the new social media channel helps us share the work undertaken across the organisation.

In redeveloping social media channels, we have taken a staggered approach. We first looked at creating videos, utilising TikTok and Instagram Reels to share short videos on local walks and places to visit near our stations. Going forward, we intend to look at longer videos that can highlight where to visit in our most recent partnership, Wey Valley CRP, showcasing a year of events and things to do along the line.

Creating the videos has enabled us to share details of our work, our stations and our local communities. We are looking forward to developing these further and creating a greater social media presence for our partnerships.



The new social media channel helps us share the work we are doing

TransWilts Community Rail Partnership



As the world emerged from the shadow of the pandemic, TransWilts CRP continued to engage with communities both on and off the railway.



At our AGM in May 2022

The café at Melksham station continues to provide food and drink for travellers returning to the trains, as well as those working at local businesses. It has also hosted several community events, including car boot sales, a drive-in cinema and a Santa's grotto. It continues to hold a weekly glee club, where anyone, including those with additional needs and their support circle, can meet and be themselves for fun, friendship and music in a safe environment. There are also bingo, karaoke sessions and games.

Since its opening, the café has provided electric car charging points. In the last year, the electricity offered has become greener, with solar panels installed on the roof to provide power for both the chargers and the building.

The TransWilts CRP has been busy at other stations along the line. The facilities at both Trowbridge and Chippenham were spruced up, as volunteers conducted a litter pick in the public areas at both stations. Meanwhile, the newly formed Swindon Station Adoption Group brightened up their station with attractive purple planters on the platforms and in the visitors' car park.

The TransWilts CRP was pleased to take part in a community rail-funded initiative to provide an audio guide describing the landmarks along the line.



One of our local community groups gets spooky on Halloween

Window Seater is a free smartphone app that, using geolocation, provides commentary for points of interest during the journey.

Community Rail Officer Sophie Martin has organised several outings to encourage people to use the trains. A successful trip to Salisbury saw a dozen people enjoy a free drink and snack at the café before travelling to Wiltshire's only city for sightseeing and shopping. A ramble and rail event had walkers take a hike to Trowbridge before catching the train back to Melksham. Another group enjoyed a day at the beach in Weston-super-Mare.

Platform, the joint education project set up by TransWilts, Severnside, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire community rail partnerships, came up trumps at the National Community Rail awards in October. At a gala evening in Manchester, the four organisations were presented with the top award in the Influencing Positive Change and Sustainability category. Platform offers schools and other educational establishments free support to encourage young people to use the train. Bespoke sessions can be arranged in schools, followed up with practical sessions at stations and onboard trains.

The year was marred by the industrial action, which plagued the service from the summer onwards.

This contributed to suppressing the number of people travelling on TransWilts services in the year. Industry figures showed nearly 190,000 made a journey – still around 25% down on pre-Covid levels. It is hoped the gap can be further closed in the coming months.

The year also saw the death of long-serving stalwart, and latterly TransWilts CRP President, Peter Blackburn in July, followed by that of his wife, Margaret, in December. Both had contributed much of their time over the years and their contribution will be missed.

Looking ahead, TransWilts CRP is leading on a feasibility study, funded by GWR, to set up a new community rail partnership for the Kennet and Avon Canal area. This would fill a gap currently not covered by a CRP and includes stations from Theale through Newbury to Pewsey.

We also continue to support plans for a new station at Corsham near Bath and Devizes Gateway.



Ramble and Rail walkers hiked to Trowbridge before catching the train back to Melksham



We were proud to take part in the annual Poppies to Paddington event for Remembrance Week

Severnside Community Rail Partnership



For Severnside Community Rail Partnership, 2022 brought a welcome return to more travel-based projects following the hiatus brought about by Covid restrictions. During the cost-of-living crisis, we've been encouraging travel to destinations offering free and low-cost opportunities, and in easy reach of local stations. One of our key priorities has been ensuring that stations are welcoming community hubs, developed as fully functional transport interchanges.



Pink Army volunteers give Avonmouth station a good clean

Days Out by Train

To help encourage people with perceived barriers to rail travel, our Days Out by Train project takes participants on accompanied trips, building confidence and knowledge of local rail travel options. The scheme currently has four targeted groups: people who are hard of hearing or from the D/deaf community; dementia support group participants and their carers; refugees and asylum seekers; and elderly people who are, or are at risk of feeling, isolated.

Participants enjoy a day out by train in the secure company of their peers and community support workers. They learn how to use their local railway stations to access social, employment and leisure activities. Each group engagement begins with a visit from a Community Rail Development Officer, who, on meeting the group in their community setting, assesses their specific needs and determines a suitable destination for their trip.



Days Out by Train at Bristol Temple Meads

Examples include a group from a refugee support café in Weston-super-Mare who explored Bristol city centre and Bath Spa Christmas Market. Groups of older people have enjoyed trips to Weston-super-Mare for fish and chips and to view the SEE MONSTER art installation. Further trips with Centre for the Deaf social groups and Patchway Memory Café have been scheduled.

"In all the years I've come to Weston I've never seen it like this before," said Elsie from Avonmouth Community Centre Lunch Club after visiting SEE MONSTER.

Involving young people

Since April 2023, our schools' engagement has been expertly delivered by the award-winning Platform scheme and hosted by the Severnside Community Rail Partnership. This has enabled us to focus on the community-based youth projects below.

Movement is a project similar to Days Out by Train, with a focus on how transport can play a role in reducing loneliness and isolation among young people aged between 16 and 24. It helps local youths use the train to explore nearby rural and coastal settings and enjoy being out of doors. Groups of young carers and young parents have been out enjoying trips to Wild Place and Noah's Ark Zoo Farm, while socialising and making new friends. Movement is one of three pilot schemes delivered under the Tackling Loneliness with Transport Fund from the Department for Transport.



Out and about with Movement



The Movement project helps reduce loneliness among young people

After a meeting with key stakeholders about concerns around safety of young people travelling independently on public transport in North Somerset, we decided to commission a short film to communicate our key messages. The stakeholders included GWR, Cross Country Trains, the British Transport Police, Avon and Somerset Police, Network Rail, North Somerset Council, Sustrans and secondary school staff.

Working with production company Unique Voice, students attending Backwell School took the starring role. Prior to filming, several in-school workshops were held to explore barriers facing young people using public transport. These workshops allowed students to discuss their current travel choices and consider what would encourage them to choose more sustainable, healthy travel over lifts from family members and friends. They also spoke about the desire to learn to drive and car ownership.

The young participants designed storyboards, wrote a script outline and were allocated roles in the film. Filming took place on trains and at local stations over two days. The group had lots of fun and demonstrated their independence while out and about at Weston-super-Mare.

The first public viewing of the film took place at Ravenswell Primary School where it was well received by young people with additional needs. The film has been made available to schools in the area and plans are afoot for content to be used as part of a social media campaign around safe, sustainable travel for young people.



A group cycle along the Strawberry Line

Youth cycle adventure days

A grant from GWR's Customer and Communities Improvement Fund has enabled youth groups from Inner City Bristol to travel to Yatton station on an extra-special trip, put together by the Strawberry Line Café and Cycle Hire. Participants enjoyed a group cycle along the Strawberry Line, with a delicious and nutritious picnic. The wide range of bikes on offer, including adapted bikes, enabled people with a variety of abilities to participate.

New community art brightens up stations

We like to celebrate the vibrant communities surrounding the stations with eye-catching, locally inspired art works. We achieve this by bringing together local stakeholders to form a steering group who decide on the themes and styles that would reflect their community. The steering groups then shortlist artists, generally championing someone from the local area.

This year has seen four vibrant new artworks appear at stations:

- Artist Valentina Paz Huxley added new portraits to the gallery of pictures at Filton Abbey Wood. The collection, titled *Pioneers of the Railways*, celebrates individuals from underrepresented backgrounds who strived for progress and made a difference on the railways. Two new portraits and an exhibition booklet were unveiled at the Department for Transport's afternoon tea event in September, and new portraits will be revealed in 2023.
- *In Our Hands* is a new photographic display at Patchway station in South Gloucestershire by artists Katie Hanning and George Dawes. The photographs depict the phrases "Together We Are Stronger" and "The Future Is In Our Hands" in British Sign Language, each photograph showing a pair of hands signing the letters.



Kulvinder Bassi MBE with artist Valentina Paz Huxley

- A shipping container at Yatton station had a makeover. The container, which stores adapted bikes for the Strawberry Line Cycle Hire, was deemed a bit of an eyesore. Local artist Damien Jeffery was selected from a shortlist due to his lifelike and colourful style. Damien's mural highlights the local flora and fauna, as well as acknowledging the heritage of this much-loved station.
- Nailsea and Backwell station hosted artworks responding to the theme of landscape. The station's location means it has views across North Somerset, providing lots of inspiration for the two schools and two artists selected. The works included were a mix of photography, oil painting, illustration and drawing.

"The artwork launch was a fantastic opportunity for our pupils to be part of an event that celebrates difference and to really understand the key message that communities are stronger when everybody is included," said Josephine Mitchell of the Woodlands Primary and Yate Academy Hearing Resource Base.

Enhancing stations with volunteer support

Throughout 2022, esteemed volunteers from across the Severnside Community Rail Partnership area rolled up their sleeves, applied sun-cream and made the very best of creating attractive, biodiverse station gardens under challenging meteorological circumstances. The exceptionally dry summer, a warm, damp autumn and sub-zero winter temperatures have made for a far-from-easy year for gardening, yet the friendship and camaraderie experienced means so many of us remain committed to making our local stations a focal point.

Activity around the stations included:

- Yatton and Clifton Down stations have new bee friendly planters, filled with gorgeous pollinating plants and flowers, supporting our fuzzy friends to thrive.

- Freshford station got a lick of paint and a new replica heritage station sign, made by David Gatrell of the family-run engineering company. The sign was created in the traditional enamel blue with white letters, looking very smart in its rural and bijou station surroundings.
- At Keynsham station, a special planter, constructed by the Somerdale Shed and Community Garden, was installed in memory of Dee James, community stalwart and lead station volunteer for Keynsham in Bloom.
- The Secret Garden at Avonmouth continues to thrive under the custodianship of Incredible Edible Bristol and additional grant funding from National Grid. The garden provides delicious fresh produce for the nearby community centre and welcomes locals to enjoy the space and friendly chat during Wellbeing Wednesday sessions.

Community Payback

The partnership continues to sponsor groups of supervised probationers carrying out placements in railway settings. This initiative is part of the probationers' community sentence under the Community Payback Unpaid Work Scheme. Much of the activity in early 2022 focused on enhancing the environment at Stapleton Road station and the adjacent Fox Park viaduct.

A new, female-only placement has recently been established at Weston-super-Mare. Women attending the placement are helping develop a garden space at the station, supported by female supervisors from local organisation Grow Feral. The women on probation are given the opportunity to develop vocational qualifications and life skills, supporting their progress into employment. Supporting some of the most vulnerable users in the probation services, the nurturing environment of the garden will allow participants to continue with the scheme, earning qualifications beyond the timespan of their community sentence.



Patchway station, where a new artwork, using British Sign Language, was installed



Artist Damien Jeffery helps brighten up Yatton station

Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership

Devon & Cornwall RAIL PARTNERSHIP

The Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership brings together local authorities, GWR and others to support the two counties' rail network, especially the branch lines. Last year was busy, with us helping in the reopening of the Dartmoor Line and running wide-ranging marketing and community engagement programmes.



Celebrating the Dartmoor Line's anniversary at Okehampton

The first year of the Dartmoor Line

The reopening of the Dartmoor Line in November 2021 may have captured the limelight, but it was just the beginning. Since then, the Exeter-Crediton-Okehampton route has made further strides, with services now doubled to provide hourly trains. Meanwhile, Okehampton's station building has reopened and is thriving, its railway heritage restored for all to enjoy.

We've been proud to support all these developments. We promoted the hourly timetable with full-page local press adverts, a social media campaign that reached more than 120,000 people, and a collaboration with GWR to distribute its leaflet, A Guide to the Dartmoor Line, to 54,000 local households.

We contributed to the reopening of Okehampton's station building by securing funding for a Dartmoor National Park visitor centre, as well as leading on the heritage project to restore the station's booking

hall, former booking office and waiting room to their 1950s and '60s heyday. Funding came from GWR's Community Rail Major Projects Fund, the Community Rail Development Fund and the Railway Heritage Trust.

The other jewel in the station's crown has been the reopening of its fantastic café, the Bulleid Buffet, which we have supported on social media and on the official Dartmoor Line website, which we run.

Over the course of the year, the line has won a succession of national awards, as well as receiving a mention in *Time Magazine's* guide to the 50 top places in the world.

In September, to promote the station building, we helped organise a discovery day called Destination Dartmoor, with nature walks, heritage tours, music on the platform and more. In November, Minister of State for Rail and HS2, Huw Merriman, visited the line to celebrate its anniversary and more than a quarter of a million journeys made to date.



Children from Madron Daniel C of E School in Penzance learn how to spot wild birds at Lelant station, with Cornwall RSPB

Community engagement

Our community engagement programme had an equally busy year, including supporting new station adoption groups at St Columb Road and Calstock.

The Calstock group has already installed two new planters, with plenty of ideas for the future, including setting up a wildflower area, improving the look of the approach path and a new heritage interpretation. St Columb Road station on the Par to Newquay line has been adopted by Newquay Community Orchard, whose young members have made an immediate impact by using their woodworking skills to build a planter for the station. The project is particularly special because it is led by a former volunteer from our University of Plymouth student volunteering programme.

Also on the Par to Newquay Line, we worked with GWR and other partners on a pilot project to offer rail vouchers to owners of newly built homes in Quintrell Downs, encouraging the 'rail habit' from the moment people move to the area.

In Devon, we are working with the County Council's Connecting You project, funded by the Department for Transport's Tackling Loneliness Fund. The first element will see our award-winning CreativiTea trains project visit the Dartmoor Line and Tarka Line, connecting the 16–24 age group, as well as the over-55s age group, with the local rail network. We will also be working with Exeter-based charity Westbank to bring its Chatty Bus scheme to the railway.

Over the last 12 months, DCRP has continued to work with local schools and community groups to provide rail familiarisation trips. Through this scheme, some 453 school children have taken trips by train, with most participants accessing the journeys through our Creative Classrooms initiative. These trips are tailor-made for schools and link directly to the curriculum through working with relevant agencies, such as the National Trust or RSPB, or by using the train as a travelling classroom.



Celebrating the rail-bus video launch at Barnstaple station

Rail-bus integration

We've worked hard to promote the excellent rail-bus integration at Okehampton station, part of our wider rail-bus marketing campaign, in partnership with GWR.

We promoted the new bus connections from Bude and Launceston to Okehampton station through local newspaper adverts and bus shelter posters. On social media, we created videos showing day trips by train and bus from Barnstaple to North Devon destinations, including Ilfracombe and Lynton and Lynmouth, and from Totnes to Salcombe and Okehampton to Lydford and Tavistock.

The films have reached more than 300,000 people so far, with lots of positive comments.

Social media

The rail-bus videos have helped grow our social media presence to more than 50,000 followers, of which more than 20,000 are from a younger audience on TikTok. In 2022, we were invited to share our social media experience by giving talks at GWR's Community Rail Conference, a national Community Rail Network webinar and SWR's Community Rail Conference.



Rebecca Catterall, centre, leads a walk with Beacon Wellbeing Hub

Walks from the railway

One of our main aims in 2022 was to combine our strength in both marketing and community engagement to promote the Walks from the Railway project. To help people get active and rediscover their railways post-pandemic, we doubled the number of self-guided walks from stations available on our website (from 18 to 36) and created video guides, promoting them with a paid-for social media campaign that reached nearly half a million people.

We complemented this with outreach work. We offered free guided walks and assisted travel to several groups around Plymouth's suburbs to help people in disadvantaged areas discover the great outdoors via the railway.

This included a taster trip for housing association staff so they could promote the experience to their service users, a sensory walk with a youth group from one of the most challenging estates in the city, and a guided walk and taster train trip for women who have been victims of abuse and trauma.

We have also set up a monthly walking group that travels by train from Plymouth to explore the Tamar Valley. The project was recognised at the Community Rail Awards, achieving second place in the Tourism and Leisure category.

Looking ahead

Looking ahead, key projects for the year will include the opening of the new Marsh Barton station, which we will support using both print and digital marketing. We are also working with GWR and the Rail Delivery Group on a digital version of the Devon and Cornwall Railcard, which will bring this popular product to a whole new audience.



Promoting Ilfracombe in one of a quartet of videos showcasing the rail-bus connections from Barnstaple station



A still from our Totnes to Salcombe bus branch line film

Engaging our followers

DCRP uses social media to give audiences, both near and far, inspiration and leisure travel ideas for adventures on the counties' scenic railways. Campaigns include the ever-popular 'Pic of the Week', with followers sending in photos from branch lines for DCRP to share; 'Walk of the Month' video guides; and great local walks from stations.

Social media followers

27,700

Facebook:
@greatscenicrailways

23,800

TikTok:
@great.scenic.railways

3,100

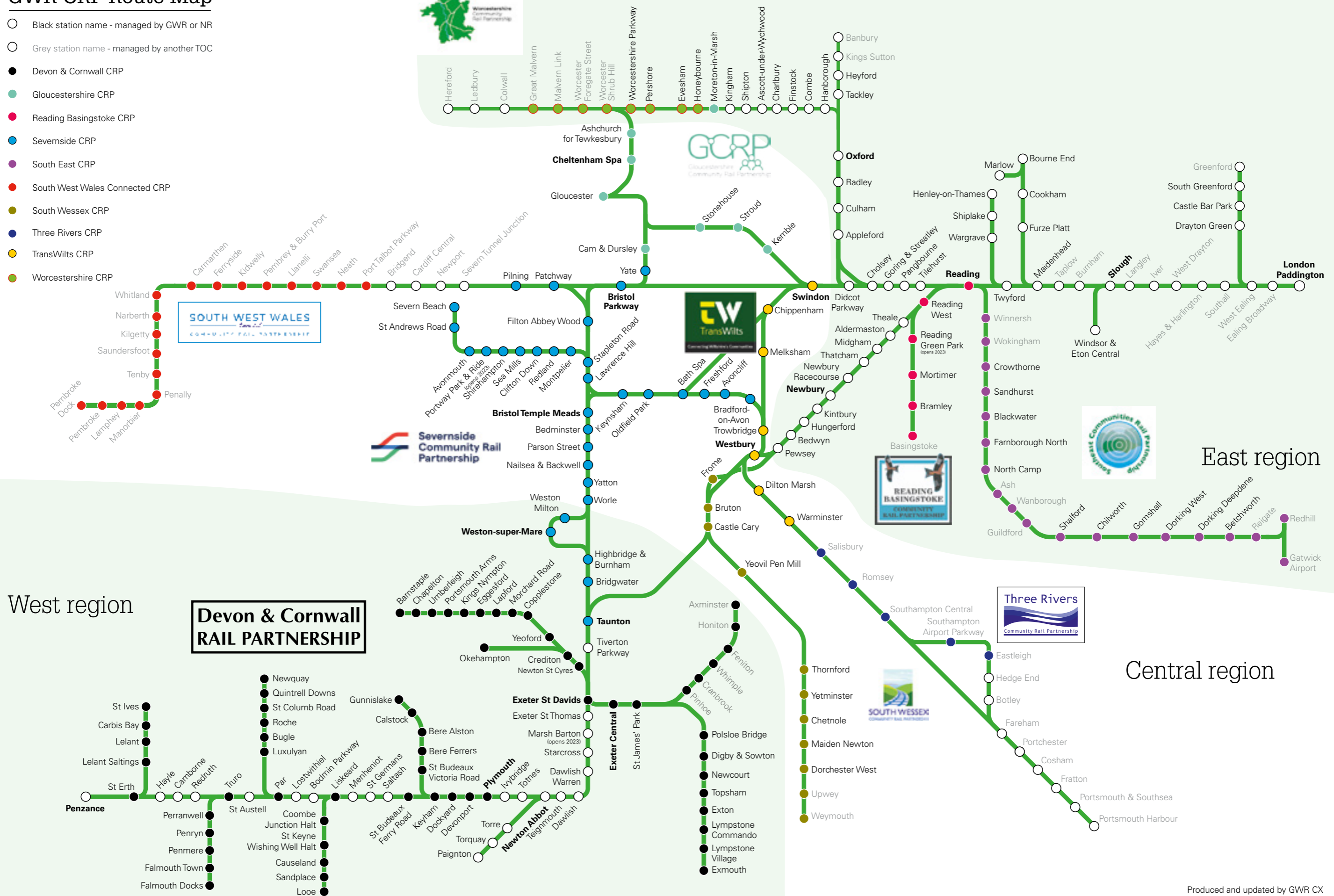
Instagram:
@greatscenicrailways

3,000

Twitter:
@dcrailpart

GWR CRP Route Map

- Black station name - managed by GWR or NR
- Grey station name - managed by another TOC
- Devon & Cornwall CRP
- Gloucestershire CRP
- Reading Basingstoke CRP
- Severnside CRP
- South East CRP
- South West Wales Connected CRP
- South Wessex CRP
- Three Rivers CRP
- TransWiits CRP
- Worcestershire CRP



Community Rail Awards



An inspiring range of community rail initiatives, delivered by community groups, partnerships and volunteers across Britain, was celebrated at the 18th Community Rail Awards held in Manchester on 6 October 2022.

The event, organised by Community Rail Network, recognised a diverse array of projects, supporting social inclusion, sustainable travel, empowered communities and economic development. There were 15 winners chosen from more than 200 entries, demonstrating how the community rail movement builds links, positivity and awareness between local people and their railways, benefitting communities and often changing lives.

The awards were held at Manchester's Central Convention Complex, with more than 430 guests attending, including community rail volunteers, officers, rail industry leaders and government representatives. The event was addressed by transport ministers from the UK and Scottish governments, plus industry leaders and personalities passionate about community rail.

GWR hosted three tables, with representatives from all the CRPs we work with, alongside GWR colleagues, who are heavily involved with Community Rail, and those shortlisted for awards.

The awards recognise the crucial, often unsung work of community rail partnerships, station friends, volunteers and community groups, working in areas such as community and youth engagement, community-led station development, diversity and inclusion, and sustainable development.

The following pages showcase the award-winning entries from CRPs that GWR work with.

For more information visit
communityrail.org.uk

Involving Diverse Groups



First place

Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership for 'Getaway'

Concept and aims

The Getaway project was devised by Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership (GCRP) in response to data showing that black and ethnic minority communities did not have equal access to rural spaces in the UK, with some groups therefore unable to access the health and wellbeing benefits associated with enjoying nature and the outdoors. GCRP made a commitment to address these inequalities, especially in the wake of an increase in knife crime and gang-related violence in their target area of Gloucester. Underpinned by the belief that the countryside is for everyone, and that young people should feel confident to travel independently by rail, the partnership set about developing opportunities for young people from diverse backgrounds to access the health and wellbeing benefits of Gloucestershire's rural spaces.

What happened?

GCRP established partnerships with two community organisations, The Friendship Cafe and The Music Works, to engage young people in the programme and deliver a range of new rural experiences. The young people actively took the lead in co-designing the days out, working together with trusted youth leaders to plan experiences based in rural destinations accessible by rail. A series of 10 day trips were delivered as part of the project, engaging

117 young people in 38 inspiring new experiences to expand their horizons, learn new skills, and gain confidence and independence through rail travel. These included canoeing, farming, bushcraft, mountain biking and outdoor cooking. The cohort of 16- to 25-year-olds also created vlogs for online platforms, encouraging others to take up new activities and develop their own creative skills.

Results

GCRP said the true success of the scheme was its impact on raising the aspirations of the young people involved. While the partnership designed the project to increase opportunities for young people to engage with nature and access wellbeing and health benefits, they did not envisage that as a result of them gaining new skills and experiences, many of the group would be inspired to carve out new career paths for themselves, including in the rail industry. Participants said the scheme had helped them to develop positive mindsets, allowed them to make new friendships and opened their minds to rail travel, particularly to access rural spaces. The project has seen some of the young people move into employment, start up businesses, invest in themselves to develop further creative skills and explore the idea of setting up their own Community Interest Company, all as a result of co-designing the experiences.

Community Creative Projects and Station Art



Second place

Sevenside Community Rail Partnership for 'In Our Hands – British Sign Language Artwork at Patchway Station'



In Our Hands is a photography project borne out of the recent refurbishments at Patchway Station. After feedback that said the station appeared too functional and desolate, Sevenside Community Rail Partnership worked with GWR and a local steering group to create a more welcoming station environment for passengers through the artwork.

Of the 11 local artists who applied, Bath Spa University student Katie Hanning was selected for her concepts based on the theme of 'bringing communities together and supporting diversity and inclusion'. Her idea was to create a photography piece in British Sign Language (BSL) using the hands of members attending the Memory Café in Patchway, spelling out the powerful messages "Together We Are Stronger" and "The Future is in our Hands".

The project enabled participants to share their experiences of hearing loss, subsequently opening up a wider dialogue about representation of the D/deaf community. The launch event involved a performance in BSL from young people at Yate School's Hearing Resource Base, the first time these students had performed in public. Contacts gained through the project are being used to continue to develop the relationship, with more local D/deaf groups being offered a 'Day Out by Train' experience.

Small Projects Award – Under £500



Second place

Sevenside Community Rail Partnership, GWR and The Grove Youth Club for 'Finding the Way to Bedminster Station'



Due to major rail improvement works at Bristol Temple Meads in the summer of 2021, all trains from the south were terminating at Bedminster, a small community station in South Bristol. The projected footfall meant there needed to be a robust rail replacement plan in place, and GWR was keen to work with the local community to help passengers navigate their way from the station to bus stops, as well as local businesses, cafés and shops.

Sevenside Community Rail Partnership saw the benefit of supporting a more creative approach to the wayfinding, rather than just using standard signs. Young people from The Grove Youth Club were enlisted to design vibrant stencils and worked in small groups using temporary chalk spray to paint the designs in a line along the walking route between Bedminster Station and rail replacement bus stops. For a total spend of just £375, the route was easily identified and used by the thousands of passengers making the journey. As a result of this project, Sevenside has also made links with Upfest and plans to link in with the 2023 street art festival to bring live art to the station, again inviting the youth club to be involved.

Most Effective Communications Campaign



First place



Southeast Communities Rail Partnership for 'Go Green by Train CO2 Savings'

Concept and aims

Southeast Communities Rail Partnership (SCRP) wanted to take part in Community Rail Week 2021, using its nationwide 'Go Green by Train' theme, but wanted to make its social media campaign unique. By promoting the sustainable transport message via authentic and relevant on-brand posts, it wanted to ensure it stood out from the crowd. SCRCP decided to target its campaign at a youth audience, engaging young people in ways relevant to their generation. SCRCP did this by relating the CO2 savings made by travelling by train to the power used to charge mobile phones.

What happened?

The project team created some bespoke graphics illustrating the CO2 savings from train journeys on each of their community rail lines compared with a car journey on the same route. The partnership asked some of its stakeholders and partners, such as Brighton & Hove Buses and the University of Brighton, for advice on obtaining reliable figures, also using LNER's online carbon footprint calculator and a greenhouse gas equivalence site to produce the statistics required. The team chose mobile phones as a comparison as these were items that their target audience could easily relate to. They produced



templates for Instagram and Twitter that incorporated the 'Go Green by Train' branding, but could be adapted to highlight the specific savings for each line. During Community Rail Week, SCRCP posted the graphics regularly and also used them in sustainable travel workshops delivered in local schools that week.

Results

The campaign produced excellent engagement figures, reaching well beyond the partnership's followers and core audience. There was a very positive reaction on Twitter and Instagram. Promotion by key partners, supporters and volunteers also helped to promote the message on Facebook and the partnership website. SCRCP now has a set of graphics it can adapt and use for future campaigns, offering a shelf life beyond the initial concentrated publicity burst. Since Community Rail Week in October 2021, SCRCP has continued to use the CO2 figures at steering group meetings and in conversations with partners and other organisations, including Shoreham Port, which has asked about carrying out a similar exercise. SCRCP described the project as a "low-cost, high-impact campaign with lasting effects", and one it feels gives them a solid base to build on in the future. The partnership has also reassessed its use of social media as a result, now using more video content and channels such as TikTok to engage new audiences.

Tourism and Leisure Award



Second place

Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership for 'Walks from the Railway'



Responding to their community's desire to get back outdoors following the pandemic, Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership (DCRP) mounted a two-year campaign to promote scenic walks from the railway across the two counties. The aim was to give locals and visitors alike the inspiration and resources to improve their physical and mental health, whilst helping to rebuild rail patronage and support tourism businesses.

DCRP doubled the number of self-guided walks on its website to 36, as well as creating video guides, a new 'Walk of the Month' feature and promoting its fast-growing TikTok account to reach younger audiences. The walks were also featured in DCRP's flagship Great Scenic Railways leaflet, of which 275,000 copies have been distributed.

The campaign reached 450,000 people on social media, with more than 1,000 positive comments and shares. Over 20,000 people visited DCRP's walks webpages, more than double its previous record. The partnership's marketing was praised by partners ranging from the National Trust to Dartmoor National Park, and local hospitality businesses reported additional bookings as a direct result of the campaign. All this helped the partnership to play its part in Devon and Cornwall's bounce back in rail passenger numbers over the past year – unrivalled almost anywhere else in the country.

Influencing Positive Change and Sustainability



First place



Platform Rail Community Education Scheme for 'Platform Rail Community Education Scheme'

Concept and aims

Platform is a rail education scheme that invests in future generations and raises climate awareness, developed collaboratively between Severnside, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Transwilt community rail partnerships (CRPs). The partnerships had a shared vision of developing an education programme across their areas that would successfully support schools in their engagement with the rail industry. They had a collective goal of pulling together a team that could deliver in-school workshops, encourage schools to use the railway and create bespoke, rail-related resources that linked to the curriculum.

What happened?

To build a business case and secure funding, education consultants Sustainable Hive were commissioned to undertake a feasibility study, embedding specialist sustainable education insights throughout. This identified key findings and recommendations, including using professional teachers with an understanding of the educational environment, building bespoke and distinctly local resources, and providing geographical context promoting sustainable, healthy travel linked to the the Personal, Social, Health and Economic education curriculum. Funding for an 18-month pilot was secured via the Community Rail Development Fund, GWR and CrossCountry. Before school-based delivery began in April 2022, the delivery team created 26 bespoke lessons that met at least one of the sustainable development goals. They included:

- Wet Wet Worcester: Exploring the role of human and physical geography in contributing to the rising problem of flooding in the area.
- Action Stations: Calling on young activists to tackle the climate crisis, exploring both mitigation and adaptation.
- What's So Great About Accrington?: Learning about the sustainable features that can be included in stations to make them more environmentally friendly and mitigate against climate change.

The Platform team contacted more than 200 schools within walking distance of stations, presented at network meetings and offered CPD sessions for teachers. They liaised with local authorities in all seven of the counties covered by the scheme and forged partnerships with other education providers.

Results

By June 2022, the team had delivered workshops and assemblies to 1,848 students, with 129 young people taking part in rail familiarisation visits. The project website had 1,110 registered users, with 227 lessons downloaded. After what was described as "outstanding" enthusiasm and uptake from schools, the project was extended to incorporate local authority Holiday and Food Programme schemes, with bookings at capacity in summer 2022. The collaborative approach has since fostered several new joint CRP projects, and all partners are committed to continuing and building the scheme, promoting sustainable and healthy behaviours among young people by engaging them in accessible, interactive and meaningful ways.

Influencing Positive Change and Sustainability



Third place

Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership for 'Let's Talk Travel'

Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership's 2021 research project 'Let's Talk Travel' focused on the barriers to employment faced by people in the community. The findings demonstrated that many people only considered employment or training opportunities in the area where they lived or in places familiar to them. Those who considered travelling avoided complex journeys and combinations of travel modes, and struggled with planning journeys, resulting in up to 40% avoiding using public transport.

The partnership recognised that confident travellers have access to more economic opportunities and so set about working on the 'Let's Talk Travel' initiative. The team engaged 120 employability and education

professionals through bespoke resources and training sessions, providing proactive, integrated transport information and journey planning to those seeking access to jobs and training. As a result of the project, employability professionals and tutors felt better equipped to support their clients, and learners and jobseekers expressed greater confidence in planning journeys, buying tickets, and navigating their way around stations and trains. The project also enabled them to develop new strategies for problem solving and keeping themselves safe on public transport, paving the way for an overall boost in confidence and improved access to opportunities for the learners and jobseekers of Gloucestershire.

Most Enhanced Railway Spaces



Second place

Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership for 'Restoration of Bere Alston Former Signal Box'



After the old signal box at Bere Alston station succumbed to years of neglect, with smashed windows, rotten doors and ivy growing over most of the building, the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership and the local Scout group knew something had to be done. Together, they undertook a major restoration project, firstly rehoming the 60,000 bees that had made the building their home. Work progressed on lovingly restoring the signal box to its former glory, with the help of a local master craftsman. Slowly, the box started to emerge and local people would regularly comment on how lovely it was to see.



The signal box is now in use for the first time since the early 1990s and, thanks to invaluable input from the local community, is now an asset rather than an eyesore, adding to the character and heritage of the Tamar Valley Line. The Scouts have adopted the platform that houses the signal box and are working in conjunction with Bere Alston in Bloom to make the platform look great for both the community and local wildlife, thanks to the addition of nature-friendly planters.

Accessibility Mentors

Last year was an incredibly busy one for the accessibility team and passengers with disabilities. The passenger assistance system has seen the return of 86% of its pre-Covid bookings figures, as passenger confidence grows. Meanwhile, new research shows that the overall rating for assistance is 4.28 out of 5 stars and customers are expressing their gratitude for the services we provide.

Last year, we wrote about our new travel training scheme. This is a programme of trips, discussions and classroom sessions to help people with disabilities gain confidence in travelling by train. This past year, we have delivered sessions to over 1,500 people (nearly four times more than in our first year) and have enjoyed great success. We have worked with a range of charities and organisations, including Assistance Dogs Cornwall; the vision impairment and complex needs charity InFocus; Berkshire Vision, a charity supporting the visually impaired; Headway Bristol, which works to improve the lives of people with brain injuries; and countless specialist teams and schools.

Some of these sessions were conducted with local CRPs – and we'd like to give a special thanks to Severnside and Southeast CRPs. You can see the benefit of working together in this blog written by a member of Berkshire Vision: [berkshirevision.org.uk/news/the-day-we-caught-the-train](https://www.berkshirevision.org.uk/news/the-day-we-caught-the-train)

As well as reaching out to communities with travel experiences, we have been working with our accessibility panel to consult on works going on within GWR. Our panel, which is made up of members from a wide range of customers with varying disabilities, meets periodically to provide greater insight and advice on projects and their impact. The panel was recently consulted ahead of the next round of disability awareness training for frontline staff, which will be delivered over the next year using real experiences from the panel.

We have also made several improvements to services and facilities. These include enhancing our collection of travel assistance cards with a dedicated braille card, providing visually impaired customers the ability to request help. We have also provided our frontline teams with a live translation system, allowing improved communication with British Sign Language users. This greatly enhances the experience of the deaf and hard of hearing communities we serve.



"Customers are expressing gratitude for the services we provide"



Building confidence

Diversity and Inclusion

At GWR, we are well placed to encourage communities from across the country to connect and build relationships. It is essential from a diversity and inclusion perspective that we are helping make and nurture those connections.



Odis Palmer

A great example of this is the amazing work done by Educafe, a Community Interest Company located in Newbury, west Berkshire.

We were able to support Educafe in helping Afghan, Hong Kong, Syrian and Ukrainian refugees improve their English language skills, and give them the opportunity

to engage with members of GWR's Learning and Development, and Apprenticeship teams, to teach them safe travel and provide career advice. This year, we expanded that support by connecting Educafe with another community group in the Plymouth area that runs language and cultural education sessions, and where refugees and local community members come together to celebrate the diversity of language and culture people bring to the region.

Our ability to make these connections, and bring together communities from West Berkshire and Devon, is an example of how we can ensure there will be a national community of equality and acceptance in the future.

Another benefit of achieving this is it encourages conversations and education on subjects that challenge communities to talk about how our history still impacts us today.

The World Reimagined is a charity that looks to educate the country on how the transatlantic slave trade impacts our lives – and not just those whose ancestors arrived on our shores in chains. They go about achieving this in several ways: by providing an anti-racism workshop for schools and businesses; publishing a book of poems written by a combination of world-renowned poets and schoolchildren; and working alongside artists from across the country to create globes, each one a unique interpretation of the impact the slave trade had – and continues to have – on our country.

I'm honoured that we were able to sponsor one of more than 100 globes created and displayed across the country. I'm proud that our directors (sponsored by our ethnicity-focused staff network at GWR) attended one of the anti-racism workshops to better understand how they could be active in the efforts to stop racism. And I'm excited that, through our community education and outreach fund, we are donating copies of the poetry book to schools and charities that support literacy programmes and education in areas suffering from socioeconomic challenges.



At the pre-launch of *The World Reimagined* globes at Westminister Abbey



The World Reimagined poetry book



Children enjoying the *My Mummy is a Train Driver* book launch

As well as encouraging communities from different parts of the country to connect, I also work with other rail service providers, both customer and freight, to ensure we are all working towards the same goals that connect community with equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives.

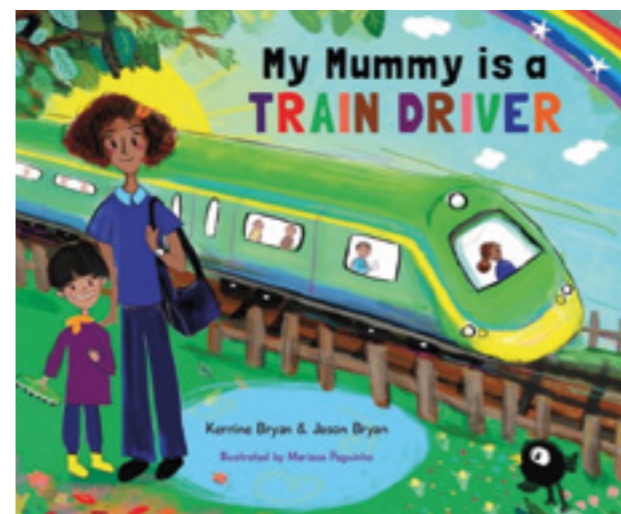
One such project is the book *My Mummy is a Train Driver*, written by a brother and sister duo who aim to break down stereotypes.

Having already published children's books titled *My Mummy is an Engineer*, *My Daddy is a Nurse*, and *My Mummy is a Scientist*, to name but a few, the authors wanted to celebrate women in the rail industry while educating children.

GWR, along with eight other rail industry partners, was able to support the project through our education and outreach fund. The project included the authors attending schools to talk about the book and its message of equality in the workplace, inspiring children to realise there are no limits to what they can achieve.

For me, these examples show how bringing together the work of communities is not just about celebrating great achievements, but more about encouraging collaboration across regions and the industry as a whole.

Odis Palmer, GWR Inclusion and Diversity Manager
Odis.Palmer@gwr.com



The children's book *My Mummy is a Train Driver*

Go Train – an Education service on the North Downs Line



Go Train is now in its second year on the North Downs Line, and we have expanded the team to include Sharon Hunt and Cath Reed.



Left to right: Sharon Hunt, Maddy Mills and Cath Reed

The Go Train programme for year 6 pupils (includes Planning your Journey, Staying Safe, Sustainable and Healthy Travel, and Railway Careers) and the Try a Train programme for young people aged 16+ continue to grow. Our workshops can be adapted to suit the needs of the participants. We've even worked with non-verbal students. And we are now working with a wider range of ages and different community groups.

One such group is Berkshire Vision. With them, we offer our Try A Train programme to small groups of young people who are either visually impaired or blind. We have been grateful for the support of Dan Pearce from GWR – the young people love touching and lifting the piece of rail track he brings with him! We've also had fun showing these groups around a stationary train. On one occasion, the North Downs Line's Education Officer, Maddy Mills, had a group of young people and a buddy dog all crammed into the toilet to practise locking the toilet door. It's an important life lesson!

In January and February 2022, we worked with three media students from Brighton University on a work placement. They created a five-minute film for our Sustainable and Healthy Travel workshop. We wanted to bring the outside world into the classroom by showing a film about our electric trains and how they work. It also included an interview with Riding Sunbeams, an innovative company helping to power electric trains using solar panels installed alongside railway lines.

In Easter 2022, we launched our first ever treasure hunt, and ran it again over the summer holidays. The Alice in Wonderland-themed quiz was downloaded over 1,200 times from our website. We were so impressed with this demand that we are now working with app developer Really Quite Something to build an app-based version, which will be launched during the Easter holidays in 2023.

In March, Cath Reed and Maddy Mills from the education team travelled to Leeds to meet with Community Rail Lancashire. There they attended the first face-to-face Community Rail Education Network meeting since the start of the pandemic. We learned lots from the experience and in November we hosted the first face-to-face meeting in the south. Our guest speaker was Railway Enforcement Officer Nick Turner. Attendees really valued the show-and-tell session and took away new ideas to try on their lines.



Year 6 pupils at Reading station

In August, we were invited to set up a stand at the Bluebell Railway, a heritage railway in Sussex. We were promoting Backtrack, the national anti-trespassing competition, handing out copies of the *Stay Safe with Thomas* books and the new *Arlo's Adventures There and Back*, a pick-a-path railway safety book, which follows Arlo and his friends on a day out as they make safe choices around the railway. The Arlo book was written and illustrated by Bessie Matthews, a freight train driver who wanted to raise money for charity, meanwhile raising awareness among children of the dangers of the railway.

We're really proud of the Go Train programme and the feedback has been amazing. "We've all learned lots – thank you!" said staff at the Castle School. "Maddy's workshop and activities were well planned and delivered, taking into account the students' needs. Train Bingo was perfect for my students."

"We liked the fact that the Education Officer comes into school first, meets the students and does a lesson with them and then we all go out on the train," said a spokesperson from Woodfield School. "It made the students more settled and familiar with Maddy."

"It has helped me build up confidence with going on the train," said one participant from Surrey Choices. "The best part was knowing the info from scratch and learning about how to get to each train."



Community Rail Education Network



Try a Train with Berkshire Vision and its Buddy Dog

Platform

Platform

Platform – rail education for Severnside, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and TransWilts community rail partnerships.



“Instilling teachers with the confidence to use the railway for school visits is more important than ever”

Established in January 2022 thanks to generous funding from GWR, Cross Country Trains and the Community Rail Network, Platform delivers rail education for Severnside, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and TransWilts community rail partnerships through in-school workshops, train trips and a dedicated website with bespoke, local, curriculum-linked teaching resources.

Through 2022, we connected classrooms with their local railways. Following two years of disrupted learning – and in the current economic climate – schools are finding it extremely difficult to run trips. Instilling teachers with the confidence to use the railway for school visits is more important than ever, along with offering the same confidence to young people.

The ethos of Platform is to deliver a fully resourced rail experience, free of charge to schools and made possible by grant contributions. We worked hard to identify free onward learning opportunities to complement the rail familiarisation experience, building cultural capital and allowing young people to combine their rail education with an exciting and meaningful event.



We combine our rail education with an exciting and meaningful event

Below, we outline the wide-ranging activities we delivered.

Autumnal adventures

In September 2022, Walwayne Court Primary School enjoyed an incredible seasonal trip. On day one, we visited the school to deliver a pre-travel workshop, returning on day two to travel with the children from Trowbridge to Bath Spa station and walking from the station to Royal Victoria Park. Despite it being September, a false autumn brought with it golden trees, crunchy leaves and an abundance of learning opportunities.

Taking part in a bespoke, Platform-led workshop, the children spent time using their five senses to explore the signs of autumn, before creating an autumnal spread, heavily bedecked with conkers and helicopter leaves. Students sat in a circle and used a variety of techniques to draw the trees around them.

Each child then created one line of poetry that summarised the autumn scene around them, adding the line to their picture. These images were then stacked together to create one big, beautiful class poem about autumn.

The day ended with lunch under the bandstand and a play in the park – well deserved after all their hard work.



Autumnal adventures

Terrific time travel

In June 2022, we spent three days looking at sustainability with students from Elmbridge Primary School in Gloucester.

After receiving in-school rail familiarisation, 90 students from year 3 got some important rail education while learning more about how transport has changed over time – for better and for worse. Each class travelled from Gloucester to Worcester



Terrific time travel

Foregate Street station, followed by a walk to the History and Heritage Pod in Worcester city centre. Once there, students worked together to create a giant transport timeline as quickly as possible – in competition with their friends from other classes. The timeline was used to further explore how transport has changed over the years, with many students raising questions about its environmental impact.

The students created their own transport invention, explaining to their peers how it was both better for passengers and better for the environment. The designs were phenomenal, creative and fun (our favourite was a train that included a swimming pool). What was clear throughout the week was the next generation's passion for environmental concerns.

“My class of children were buzzing with excitement, interest and curiosity after working with Emilie during the initial rail safety visit to school, said Alison Petticrew from Elmbridge Primary School. “Our rail travel from Gloucester to Worcester Foregate Street allowed the children to experience safe train travel – over 50% of the class had never been on a train before. The children were excited to be able to apply the rail safety skills. Emilie selected a balance of well-chosen activities for the children to complete at the pod in Worcester and all the children engaged fully in the tasks given. A super day. Many thanks to all involved.”

Christmas circus by train

Working with Coniston Primary School in South Gloucestershire, we delivered an unforgettable Christmas adventure. After receiving an in-school rail safety, confidence and behaviour workshop, all 187 students attending the school participated in a rail familiarisation trip from Filton Abbey Wood to Bristol Temple Meads. We were delighted to see every student following safety guidelines while out and about. This was no mean feat considering the youngest participants were just four years old.

From Temple Meads it was a very short walk to the Loco Klub, a community arts venue set in the ashpits under the station. The Loco Klub is situated in a series of atmospheric tunnels, and the excitement was palpable as the students entered and heard Christmas music blasting. There was further excitement when the Invisible Circus gave a special performance, followed by Christmas craft activities, including making a train decoration. Each student received gifts at the end, wrapped and ready to be placed under the tree at home.

“The team at Platform have been outstanding from start to finish,” said Alan Walters, Headteacher at Coniston Primary School. “Emilie provided a brilliant and informative assembly, full of enthusiasm and fun. The safety messages were put across really well and that was evident when we were stood with 60 children on the platform. I can’t express the importance of this trip to the children of Coniston. The vast majority had never been on a train and some may never go on one again. However, the two days were well organised and the children had such a special time that they will remember this experience forever. The circus acts, the Christmas crafts and the presents added to a truly wonderful experience, and I have never seen so much enjoyment on a school trip.”



We spent three days looking at sustainability with students from Elmbridge Primary School in Gloucester

The whole package

In December 2022, further education students attending Pershore College received a comprehensive railways package that included rail-familiarisation, confidence to travel and information about careers in the rail industry.

A session covering safety and confidence to travel was followed with a rail trip from Pershore to Worcester Foregate Street. Whilst in Worcester, Platform delivered a workshop about careers in rail, which focused on the variety of careers in the rail industry, as well as entry-level jobs and apprenticeships.

There were opportunities to teach rail familiarisation at both stations, including reading departure boards, using help-points and ticket purchasing.

“Emilie and Imogen were fabulous,” said Becky Williams from Pershore College. “The session was pitched at the right level for students. Platform made the trip accessible by making it free. Students noted the development in their confidence following the trip. I will be recommending Platform to my colleagues.”



Network Rail

From London Paddington to Penzance, Network Rail’s Western Route covers a diverse area – and, more importantly, diverse communities that are keen to be involved with the railways.



Máedóc Ellis

Máedóc Ellis is the Network Rail lead for all things community rail on the Western Route and has been in post for the last year, facilitating more than 20 community schemes. These range from a gnome garden in Totnes to murals on bridges and community gardens. Throughout the year, he helps facilitate a range of community events at the three Network Rail-managed stations: Bristol Temple Meads, Reading and London Paddington.

Within Network Rail, Máedóc acts as an advocate for community rail, helping establish a working group with the organisation’s industry programme directors to explore how Network Rail can deepen its relationships with CRPs.

“It’s about empowering communities to take ownership of their railways, whether that be brightening a station with some new flowers or putting a CRP in touch with a Network Rail colleague to discuss integrated transport,” said Máedóc.

Máedóc is also often able to help volunteers and CRPs with difficult issues.

“A group contacted me as they were concerned about a telecoms mast being expanded in the area next to their garden. I was able to speak to the contractor and ensure that they would be in contact with the group before any other disruptive works took place.”

Some of the projects realised in the last year with CRPs and GWR include:

- Involvement of industry programme directors in feasibility surveys into the three new CRPs on the route.
- New process guides for events at our managed stations and use of unused Network Rail land.
- Joint volunteer days with CRPs and industry partners on community schemes.
- Alignment and joint working between Network Rail and GWR at community rail sites such as Taunton.

Enhanced engagement, greater alignment and simplification, and support for CRPs are all key to building on these successes, as well as closer working with GWR and other train operating company colleagues. “Community Rail is something that will only continue to grow,” said Máedóc, “and we in Network Rail have to be ready to meet that challenge.”



